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●796 To show the persistence of the Shamanistic ceremonial, it is interesting to find that the rites connected with the cult of the sky, as practised at the present day, are strikingly similar to those of the eighth century.[1] The ceremony of sacrificing to the sky is called among the Turks of the Minusinsk District *Tigir Tayi*. It is held every third year, usually towards the end of June. Among most of these Turks, for instance the Beltir and Kachints, it has the character of a strictly clan ceremonial. Women are not allowed to take part in it, nor even to help with the preparations. The spot chosen is usually the top of the highest mountain in the neighbourhood on which birches are growing. Some of these birches are sacred, and near them two fires are lighted, one called *ulug ot*, 'the senior fire', and the other *kichig ot*, 'the junior fire'. No one dares to approach the 'junior fire' from the east, and even from other directions only the leaders of the ceremony are allowed access. A ram or a he-goat is then sacrificed, care being taken that no blood should be shed, and no cry heard from the sacrificial animal. Similar precautions are taken in the sacrifice of the horse to Ulgen among the Altaians. Then the fore-quarters of the beast are boiled on the 'senior fire', while the hind-quarters, together with the flesh of various non-sacrificial animals, are boiled on the 'junior fire'. Meanwhile each head of a family ties his *üldürbä*, that is, a long thread of flax with eagle feathers attached to it, to the sacred birches. The ends of these threads are kept in the hand, and the master of the ceremonies begins the song to the sky, while the

Practices of the Aborigines of Northern Asia', *Folk-Lore*, March 31, 1914.

[1] I. P. Melioranski, *op. cit.*, pp. 264–5.

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others form a chorus. The feathered thread is the road by which the song rises to the sky. The meat which has been prepared on the 'senior fire' is taken out and carried round in a circle, in the direction of the sun. After that the meat, with all the articles used in its preparation, is burnt on the 'senior fire', and if the smoke goes straight to the sky it is a good omen for the clan. Then only is the meat which was prepared on the 'junior fire' ceremonially eaten, after which all the bones and remains of the feast have to be burnt on the 'senior fire'.[1]

Ethnography.

The Iranian Turks.

The question now arises, What Turkic nations go to form the group of Iranian Turks?

THE TURKOMANS. Their number in Persia, Khiva, and Bokhara is about 600,000. Of these 290,000 (in 1911, as against 248,000 in 1897) are in Transcaspian territory of Turkestan. Among the Turkomans subject to Russia must also be reckoned the Caucasian Turkomans, some 11,000.[2]

The Turkomans of Turkestan were subjugated by the Russians in 1881 after a stubborn resistance. The Russians put a stop to their slave trade, and from that time they began to be more settled and to take up agriculture. But even now a large proportion are still nomadic horse-breeders, adhering to the customary law

[1] S. D. Maynagasheff, 'Sacrifice to the Sky among the Beltir', *Literary Collection of the Anthropological Museum of the Acad. of Science*, Petrograd, 1915, vol. III, pp. 93–102.

[2] The Turkomans of the Ottoman Empire, commonly called Turkmen or Avshahr, are not dealt with here.